

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 3SHB 1741

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, February 28, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to the oral history program.

**Brief Description:** Transferring the oral history program from the secretary of state to the legislature.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Apps Subcom GG (originally sponsored by Representatives Hunt, Skinner and Conway).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/19/08, 95-0.

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/28/08 [DPA-WM, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.  
Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Kline, McDermott and Pridemore.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.  
Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton.

**Staff:** Cindy Calderon (786-7784)

**Background:** The Oral History Program (Program) records, transcribes, and publishes the memories of current and former members and staff of: the Legislature; stage government officials and personnel; and other citizens who have shaped Washington's political history. The Program's mission is to document and preserve the history of the Legislature. This is accomplished through interviews, photographs, articles, and video. The Office of the Secretary of State (SOS) administers the Program. The SOS contracts with independent oral historians and the history departments of the state universities for conducting and recording the interviews.

A Legislative Advisory Committee (Committee) governs the Program. The Committee selects the persons to be interviewed, determines what transcripts should be published, and sets policy for the Program. Transcripts and publications are available through libraries and state archives, and are available for sale to the public. The Committee consists of the SOS; the Secretary of the Senate (Secretary); the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives (Chief Clerk); two Republican Senators; two Democrat Senators; two Republican Representatives; and two Democrat Representatives. A group of ex-officio appointees also guide the program.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Oral history activities are funded through donations. The SOS may solicit and accept gifts and donations to be used for conducting oral histories; archival activities; and Washington State library activities. Money received is deposited into the Oral History, State Library, and Archives Account, which is held in the custody of the State Treasurer. Expenditures may be made only for the purposes of the oral history program, archives program, and the state library program.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments):** The Oral History Program is divided between the SOS and the Legislature, thereby creating two separate programs. That portion of the Oral History Program that addresses oral histories of current and former members and staff of the Legislature and other citizens who participated in the state's political process; those duties and responsibilities are transferred to the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, and is renamed the Legislative Oral History Program. However, the employee positions are not transferred. The duties and responsibilities of the Oral History Program not transferred to the Legislature remain with the SOS and will be called the Washington State Legacy Project (Legacy Project)

The Secretary and the Chief Clerk may fund oral history activities of the Legislative Oral History Program through donations and funds from the Legislative Gift Center; and solicit and accept donations to be used to conduct oral histories. Funds received will be deposited in the Legislative Oral History Account, which is created in the custody of the State Treasurer, and may only be used for purposes of the Program.

The Oral History Advisory Committee is renamed the Legislative Oral History Committee (Committee). The Committee maintains its current functions and duties (except it will advise the Secretary and the Chief Clerk rather than the SOS). The SOS is not a member of the Legislative Oral History Committee. Ex officio members may be appointed by a majority vote of the Committee's members and the Chair of the Committee must be elected by a majority vote of the Committee members.

The Legacy Project records and documents oral histories of current and former members of the state executive and judicial branches, the state congressional delegation, and other citizens who have participated in the state's history. The SOS may create an advisory council to provide advice and guidance on matters pertaining to operating the Legacy Project. The SOS may solicit and accept gifts to fund the Legacy Project and use those funds in the same manner as allowed when it was the Program.

When an interview candidate has occupied positions in multiple branches of the government, the interview will be conducted according to the last position held by the candidate, except the candidate may select which program the candidate wishes to prepare his or her oral history.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments):** The Striking amendment removes the condition that this act is null and void if specific funding is not provided. The portion of the Oral History Program that is divided and transfers its duties and responsibilities to the Legislature does not include the transfer of employee positions. The Secretary of the State is removed as a member of the newly named Legislative Oral History Committee. Finally, with respect to the newly named Washington State Legacy Project, oral histories are no longer

limited to citizens who participated in the state's political history rather it is citizens who participated in the state's history.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Third Substitute PRO:** We like this bill as it passed the House and we believe we like the striking amendment even more if it allows us to keep our FTEs as they are. In the future we may need to add money or FTEs.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Megan Moreno, Office of the Secretary of State.